DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 421 453 SO 029 459

AUTHOR White, Sheida; Vanneman, Alan
TITLE The NAEP 1997 Arts Education Assessment: An Overview.
INSTITUTION National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO NCES-98-527
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 8p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Center for Education Statistics (ED), U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20208-5653; web address: http://nces.ed.gov
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT Focus on NAEP; v2 n4 Aug 1998
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Art Education; Competence; Dance; Drama; *Educational Assessment; *Educational Background; Elementary Secondary Education; Fundamental Concepts; Grade 12; Grade 4; Grade 8; *Knowledge Level; *Music; Music Education; *National Surveys; Performance; Problem Solving; Student Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *National Assessment of Educational Progress

ABSTRACT

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 1997 Arts Education Assessment represents the first comprehensive approach on a national level to the development of methods for assessing student performance in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. The Assessment reflects the conviction that the arts are essential for every child's complete development and education. The goal of the NAEP 1997 Arts Education Assessment Framework was to obtain a comprehensive picture of what U.S. arts education is and what it ought to be. A special matrix was designed to analyze all four arts in terms of content and process. The content included knowledge and skills, including perceptual, technical, expressive, and intellectual/reflective skills. The processes included creating, performing, and responding. The NAEP assessment developed two special types of tasks for the tests: paper-and-pencil tasks and performance tasks. Paper-and-pencil tasks required students to respond to multiple choice questions, short constructed responses, and extended constructed responses. Special scoring guides were designed to discriminate among, and give credit for, the full range of possible student answers. The performance tasks were especially complex. The NAEP Arts Education Assessment created tasks that were suitable for a variety of students with a variety of educational backgrounds. (JEH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 421 453

The NAEP 1997 Arts Education Assessment: An Overview.

by Sheida White

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SO 029 459

National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.

Published: 1997

NCES 98-527

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

Focus on NAEP

Vol. 2 No. 4

August 1998

The NAEP 1997 Arts Education Assessment: An Overview

Abstract: *The NAEP 1997 Arts Education Assessment represents the first comprehensive approach on a national level to the development of methods for assessing student performance in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. This Focus on NAEP, the first in a series of five publications, gives an overview of that effort.*

Introduction. In 1997 the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) completed the first national arts assessment in twenty years, and the first ever to go beyond music and the visual arts to include theatre. Assessments for music, theatre, and the visual arts and also dance were field tested in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. The full-scale assessment covered eighth-grade students only, and did not include dance. In addition to including a broader range of art forms, the assessment used a richer mix of art works for students to respond to, and more diverse tasks, which required students to create and perform, as well as respond. These tasks required innovative scoring methods to evaluate student artistic achievement objectively and reliably. This *Focus on NAEP* report, along with four others on the individual arts, will give a preview of the NAEP 1997 Arts Education Report Card, to be released in the fall of 1998.

The Arts Education Report Card will contain an assessment of eighth-grade student performance in music, theatre, and the visual arts, drawing data from both public and private schools. NAEP assessed performance in music and the visual arts using a nationally representative sample of all students, regardless of their background in music or the visual arts. The theatre assessment was a targeted assessment, limited to students who would have taken at least 30 class hours of instruction in theatre by the end of the 1996–97 school year. The samples were large enough to obtain statistically valid results. Because of the difficulty of obtaining a sample large enough to be consistent with NAEP's standards, no assessment of dance was conducted, although the Report Card will contain examples of dance assessment tasks.

Background. In 1992, the Arts Education Consensus Project, sponsored by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), began an 18-month effort to establish objectives for assessing arts education in the nation's elementary and secondary schools. The National Endowment for the Arts, in collaboration with the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, funded the Arts Education Consensus Project, designed to develop the NAEP Arts Education Framework. The framework, developed simultaneously with the National Standards for Arts Education, received substantial input from the general public, along with arts educators, artists, policy makers, and business representatives. In 1995, NAEP began field-testing assessment tasks based on the framework, administering the actual assessment in 1997.

The importance of the arts. The NAEP 1997 Arts Education Assessment Framework reflects its authors' conviction that the arts are essential for every child's complete development and education. The expectation is not that all children will become professional artists, although some will. What is expected is that all students will experience the joy of creating and the self-confidence that comes from the development of skills and performance; that they will come to know the importance of discipline, practice, persistence, and self-

criticism; and that they will apply what they have experienced and learned through the arts to other aspects of their lives. The benefits of artistic experience and knowledge are prized not only by educators but also by parents and the business community.

Arts for everyone. The ultimate purpose of the NAEP 1997 Arts Education Assessment Framework was to obtain a comprehensive picture of what arts education is in the United States and what it ought to be. The framework emphasized performance, and the assessment of the arts achievement of *all* students, not just those with specialized education in the arts. This was not always possible. Not all American schools offer significant instruction in all four arts. Some schools sponsor extensive arts education programs, providing instruction in dance and theatre, as well as music and the visual arts. In some school systems, however, the arts are a marginal experience for students at the elementary and middle school level and an elective subject in high school.

The Framework Matrix

The Arts Education Consensus Project created a special matrix to guide the development of the assessment framework, helping to ensure consistency in assessment across the arts (see figure 1). The matrix analyzed all four arts in terms of processes and content. Processes include (1) *creating*, (2) *performing*, and (3) *responding*. Content includes (1) *knowledge* and (2) *skills*, including *perceptual, technical, expressive*, and *intellectual/reflective* skills. This section sets forth the framework's analysis of the four art forms in terms of process and content.

As the matrix illustrates, the nature of dance and music allows students to be assessed both as creators and performers. In theatre, creating and performing blend into one; even the performance of an existing play requires students to make creative decisions involving lighting, staging, costume, direction, and characterization. In the visual arts, students are assessed as creators, not performers. The process of responding, on the other hand, is applicable for all four arts. Content, the knowledge and skills appropriate for each individual art, cuts across all four disciplines.

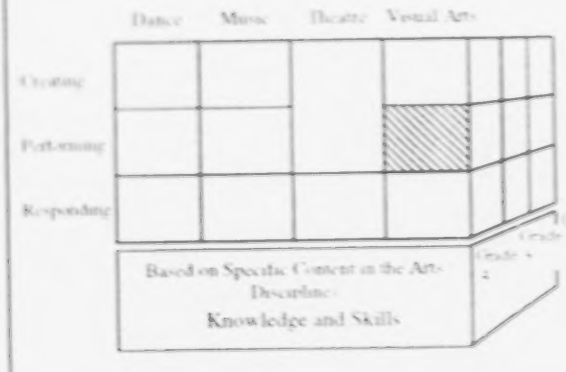
Processes

Creating refers to generating original art. This includes the expression of a student's unique and personal ideas, feelings, and responses by creating a visual image, a dramatic character, a written or improvised dramatic work, or by composing or improvising a piece of music or a dance.

Performing means re-creating an *existing* work, a process that calls upon the abilities of students to reproduce or interpret such a work. Typically, "performing" does not apply to the visual arts, where reproducing an artist's existing work is not central. A student playing a transcription for solo piano of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is an example of performing, while an improvisation on the same piece would be an example of creating.

Responding varies from the relatively passive response of an audience member to a work of art or performance to the interactive response between a creator/performer and his/her creation. Although a response is often thought of as verbal (either oral or written), responses can also be conveyed non-verbally or in the art forms themselves. Such a response can be emotional, intellectual, or physical, as the work is at once understood and critiqued. Responding requires students to exercise their abilities to analyze, reflect, make judgments, and generate new ideas. A student writing a critique of a performance of *Rhapsody in Blue* is an example of responding.

Figure 1.—The Framework Matrix



NOTE: In theatre, creating and performing blend into one; while in the visual arts, students are assessed as creators, not performers.

SOURCE: 1997 NAEP Arts Education Assessment Framework. National Assessment Governing Board

while a student choreographing a dance to *Rhapsody in Blue* would be an example of creating which shares elements of responding.

Content

There are two major components of learning expected of students who participate in the study of the arts. Students should gain (1) *knowledge and understanding about the arts*, including the *personal*, *historical*, *cultural*, and *social* contexts for works, and (2) *perceptual*, *technical*, *expressive*, and *intellectual/reflective skills*.

Knowledge and Understanding. When students engage in the artistic processes of creating, performing, and responding, they draw upon various kinds of knowledge and understanding about the arts in order to construct meaning.

Personal knowledge is knowledge drawn from a student's own life and experiences. A student looking at a self-portrait by Rembrandt or Chuck Close would draw on her own self-knowledge to consider how she might portray herself. *Historical knowledge* can refer to both general historical knowledge and knowledge of the history of a specific art form. Students performing Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* would benefit from knowing about the Irish immigrant experience at the turn of the 20th century and about naturalism in American literature and theatre.

Cultural knowledge includes knowledge about students' own culture and its past, and knowledge of other cultures. Students studying or performing in Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* should understand the interest in American folklore, democratic ideals, and patriotism that characterized the period of the Great Depression and World War II. *Social knowledge* includes an understanding of social values, structures, and change. A work like Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown, and Beige*, depicting the African American's long struggle to escape oppression and achieve equality, demands social awareness on the part of the listener to be understood fully.

Skills. The acquisition and application of skills determine the *quality* of creating, performing and responding within the arts. Students require *perceptual skills* to grasp the significance of sensory stimuli and to discern nuance within a given art form. For example, dancers must recognize beats and rhythms to perform correctly. *Technical skills*, such as the physical dexterity developed by musicians, are needed to produce a work with quality. *Expressive skills* allow students to impart a unique and personal nature to the work and create a distinctive impression on their audience. This occurs in drama when performers communicate personal emotion through the dialogue and action of the play. Finally, *intellectual/reflective skills* enable students to test different creative possibilities, solve artistic problems, refine their work, and push it beyond the immediate, as a painter does when he takes an outdoor sketch and reworks it in the studio.

NAEP and Dance. Dance assessment tasks for fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students were developed and field tested, but no assessment was administered in dance, because of the difficulty of obtaining a sample large enough to be consistent with NAEP's technical standards. The 1997 Arts Education Report Card will contain dance assessment tasks for the eighth grade, while a separate Field Test Process Report will contain dance assessment tasks and scoring guides for all three grades.

NOTE: For reasons of confidentiality, the students shown in this picture are not NAEP participants.

PHOTO BY JULIE NORA

Throughout the processes of creating, performing, and responding in the arts, students are called upon to apply knowledge and skills simultaneously. Knowledge and skills rarely function in isolation; one implies the other. Students involved in creating, performing, and responding gain knowledge "about" the arts, but also learn "through" and "with" the arts. In turn, students later use such knowledge—in history, for example, or aesthetics—when creating, performing, or responding.

Assessment Tasks

The NAEP Arts Education Assessment developed innovative tasks for the contents and processes of all four arts disciplines at the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades

NAEP and Music. The NAEP 1997 Music Assessment of eighth-grade students is the first national music assessment since 1978. Students were assessed regardless of whether they had studied music. Results will appear in the NAEP 1997 Arts Education Report Card. NAEP also developed and tested assessment tasks and scoring guides for fourth- and twelfth-grade students. Materials for all three grades will appear in the Field Test Process Report.

NOTE: For reasons of confidentiality, the student shown in this picture is not a NAEP participant.

PHOTO BY CLAIRE FLANDERS, courtesy Levine School of Music, Washington, DC

Assessment tasks were prepared by the Educational Testing Service, under the guidance of four discipline-specific committees, composed of arts educators and state officials. NAEP began field testing these tasks in 1995. Field tests for fourth- and eighth-grade students were completed in 1995 for all four subjects, while the twelfth-grade field tests occurred in 1997, for all four subjects. The twelfth-grade field tests were held to evaluate the validity of the arts tasks, even though NAEP had determined that it would not conduct an assessment for twelfth-grade students. The arts tasks tested included both paper-and-pencil and performance tasks.

Paper-and-pencil tasks. Special paper-and-pencil tasks were developed to assess students' understanding of the arts. For example, the field test of the dance tasks used videotapes of actual dances as cues, or "stimuli," for questions. The field test for music used a special recording of a violin performance that included deliberate errors to assess students' ability to detect "right" and "wrong" ways of playing. In the field test for theatre, students were shown a scene from a film, first without and then with the soundtrack, and were asked to discuss the extent to which the non-verbal behavior of the actors conveyed the meaning of the scene. In the field test of the visual arts, students were shown four types of cups, ranging from plastic to fine china, and were asked questions that considered the cups from both aesthetic and functional points of view.

The paper-and-pencil tasks included multiple-choice, short constructed-response, and extended constructed-response questions, which required students to write one or more paragraphs in response to the stimuli. These tasks required sophisticated scoring guides that could discriminate between, and give credit for, the full range of possible student answers.

Performance tasks. The performance tasks proved to be especially complex. Unlike other NAEP assessments, video and audio recording devices were used to record the tasks. In the dance field test, professional dancers demonstrated dances to students in person after it was found that students had difficulty using pre-recorded videos to learn the dance routines. In the music field test, students sang, played their own instruments, and, in some cases, used electronic keyboards. In the visual arts performance tasks, students worked with Plasticine (a clay-like substance), charcoal, drawing pencils, and numerous construction materials. Scoring guides had to be developed to provide consistent and accurate assessment

NAEP and Theatre. The NAEP 1997 Theatre Assessment of eighth-grade students is the first national assessment of student achievement in theatre. The assessment was limited to students who had taken in-school theatre classes. Results will appear in the NAEP 1997 Arts Education Report Card. NAEP also developed and tested assessment tasks and scoring guides for fourth- and twelfth-grade students. Materials for all three grades will appear in the Field Test Process Report.

NOTE: For reasons of confidentiality, the students shown in this picture are not NAEP participants.

Photo of 1990 production of "The Children's Hour" courtesy Living Library Theatre, Inc., Santa Monica, California

of the full range of student achievement on these tasks. NAEP plans to make available to the public all the tasks not covered by copyright.

Assessment Sample

The assessments for music and the visual arts used *nationally representative* samples of the general student population of eighth graders, while the theatre assessment was targeted to eighth graders who had taken in-school theatre classes. NAEP used a targeted assessment for theatre both to assess the students fairly and obtain results that resembled the breadth of student achievement allowed for in the theatre scoring guides. The field tests in theatre for the fourth and eighth grades, which sampled the general student population, found that it was difficult to obtain the full range of performance from the students sampled. Because of the limited number of schools in the country offering dance programs, NAEP did not conduct an assessment for dance.

The music and theatre assessments used samples of about 2,000 students each, while the visual arts sample was about 2,500. These samples were large enough to support statistically reliable analyses.

NAEP Arts Education Reports

The 1997 Arts Education Report Card will be published in the fall of 1998 and will give data on eighth-grade student achievement in music, theatre, and the visual arts. It will also give examples of assessment tasks from the eighth-grade dance field test. In addition, the Report Card will provide information from a variety of background questionnaires. Students who participated in the three assessments—music, theatre, and the visual arts—filled out questionnaires. School background questionnaires were administered for all three subjects. A teacher background questionnaire was administered for theatre only, because the theatre assessment was targeted. This ensured that the students who took the assessment had taken classes from the teachers responding to the questionnaire. Information from these questionnaires can be used to identify possible relationships between student background and student achievement or between school or classroom practices and student achievement.

The Field Test Process Report will be published in the spring of 1999 and will provide extensive information on the development, administration, and scoring of assessment tasks for the four arts disciplines at the fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade levels. Schools, districts, and states can use the process report to help develop or refine their own arts assessment programs at all three grade levels. In addition, arts educators may want to adapt specific assessment tasks and scoring guides for use in their own classes.

NAEP and the Visual Arts. The NAEP 1997 Visual Arts Assessment of eighth-grade students is the first national visual arts assessment since 1978. Students were assessed regardless of whether they had studied the visual arts. Results will appear in the NAEP 1997 Arts Education Report Card. NAEP also developed and tested assessment tasks and scoring guides for fourth- and twelfth-grade students. These materials will appear in the Field Test Process Report

NOTE: For reasons of confidentiality, the students shown in this picture are not NAEP partcipants.

PHOTO BY UNIPHOTO

Four Focus on NAEP publications, on dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts, are currently available. Each provides additional background and detail on NAEP activities in the particular art covered by the *Focus on NAEP*.

Conclusion

The NAEP Arts Education Assessment is the first comprehensive approach to developing an assessment of all four arts on a national level. The assessment developed paper-and-pencil and performance tasks for all four arts disciplines, based on a common understanding of arts processes and content; it created tasks suitable for a variety of students with a variety of educational backgrounds; and it created effective scoring guides that could recognize and give credit for the full range of student ability. The findings provide performance data for the general population of eighth-grade students in music

and the visual arts, as well as performance data for a targeted population of eighth-grade students in theatre.

The authors of the Arts Education Framework argued that "No child in an American school should be deprived of the opportunity to see, hear, touch, and understand the accumulated wisdom of our artistic heritage, and to make one's own contributions through productions and performances." The NAEP Arts Education Assessment will provide significant information toward determining how close American schools are to achieving that goal.

For Further Information

Arts Education Assessment Framework for the 1997 National Assessment of Educational Progress. Single copies are available free from the National Assessment Governing Board, 800 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 825, Washington, DC 20002–4233. Copies may also be obtained at **http://www.nagb.org/pub.html**.

National Standards for Arts Education. Copies are available for $20 from the Music Educators National Conference, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston VA 20191, 800–336–3768.

Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, NCES 95–082, provides data obtained from questionnaires sent to the principals of nationally representative samples of public schools. It is not in print, but is available over the NAEP web site at **http://nces.ed.gov/NAEP/**.

The following Focus on NAEP publications are also available free from the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20208–5653. Copies may also be accessed over the World Wide Web at **http://nces.ed.gov/NAEP/**.

NAEP and Dance: Framework, Field Test, and Survey, NCES 98–459

NAEP and Music: Framework, Field Test, and Assessment, NCES 98–529

NAEP and Theatre: Framework, Field Test, and Assessment, NCES 98–528

NAEP and the Visual Arts: Framework, Field Test, and Assessment, NCES 98–526

The Focus on NAEP series briefly summarizes information about the ongoing development and implementation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This series is a product of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Commissioner, Gary W. Phillips, Associate Commissioner for Education Assessment. This issue was written by **Sheida White** of NCES and by **Alan Vanneman** of the Education Statistics Services Institute. For more information, contact **Sheida White** at 202–219–1675. To order other NAEP publications, call Bob Clemons at 202–219–1690, or e-mail bob_clemons@ed.gov.

Information on NAEP may also be obtained over the World Wide Web at **http://nces.ed.gov/naep/**.